What is claimed is:

1. Use of a recombinant adeno-associated virus (rAAV) comprising a heterologous gene operably linked to sequences which control expression thereof in a cell for the manufacture of a medicament for reducing the immune response to the rAAV, wherein the rAAV is substantially free of contamination with a helper virus and is administered to a skeletal muscle cell.

2. Use of recombinant adeno-associated virus (rAAV) comprising a transgene operably linked to sequences which control expression thereof in a cell for the manufacture of a medicament for prolonging expression of the transgene, wherein the rAAV is substantially free of contamination with a helper virus and is administered to a skeletal muscle cell.

3. Use according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the transgene is a secretable protein.

4. Use according to claim 3, wherein the protein is selected from the group consisting of Factor IX, ApoE, β-interferon, insulin, erythropoietin, growth hormone, and parathyroid hormone.

5. Use according to any of claims 1 to 4, wherein the rAAV consists of, from 5' to 3', 5' AAV inverse terminal repeats (ITRs), a heterologous promoter, the transgene, a polyadenylation sequence, and 3' AAV ITRs.

6. Use according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the transgene is a dystrophin gene.

7. A method for expressing a transgene in a skeletal muscle cell in the absence of a cytotoxic immune response directed against the cell, comprising the step of introducing into the cell a recombinant adeno-associated virus (rAAV) comprising a transgene operably linked to sequences which control its expression, wherein the rAAV is substantially free of contamination with a helper virus and wherein the transgene is expressed in the cell.

8. The method according to claim 7, wherein the transgene is a secretable protein.

9. The method according to claim 8, wherein the protein is selected from the group consisting of Factor IX, ApoE, β-interferon, insulin, erythropoietin, growth hormone, and parathyroid hormone.

10. The method according to claim 7, wherein the rAAV consists of, from 5' to 3', 5' AAV inverse terminal repeats (ITRs), a heterologous promoter, the transgene, a polyadenylation sequence, and 3' AAV ITRs.